

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, ECON, BB, US

SUBJECT: INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH GOA ON US MILITARY
FACILITIES

1. SUMMARY: DECEMBER 13 INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON OUR
MILITARY FACILITIES IN ANTIGUA WERE RELAXED AND FRIENDLY
AND BROUGHT NO SURPRISES. WE STRESSED THIS NOT A
NEGOTIATING SESSION, NOTING THAT WE ANTICIPATE DETAILED,
SUBSTANTIVE TALKS NEXT YEAR. GOA REPS SUGGESTED NEGO-
TIATIONS FOR NEW AGREEMENT BE HELD IN ANTIGUA NO EARLIER
THAN MARCH 31, 1977. THEY STRESSED GOA NEED FOR US
ASSISTANCE TO OVERCOME UNEMPLOYMENT AND OTHER ECONOMIC
DEFICIENCIES. WE NOTED THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO PAY
REASONABLE COMPENSATION. WE AVOIDED LINKING DEVELOPMENT
NEEDS AND U.S. MILITARY REQUIREMENTS. END SUMMARY.

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2. INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH ANTIQUANS ON RETENTION OF

US MILITARY FACILITIES STARTED WITH U.S. TEAM WELCOMING ANTIGUAN TEAM (WILLIAMS, PHILLIPS, CHALLENGER) AND EMPHASIZING LONG HISTORY OF U.S.-ANTIGUAN FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION. DEPTOFFS STRESSED INFORMAL NATURE OF SESSION AND NOTED THAT USG IS IN NO POSITION TO MAKE ANY COMMITMENTS OR DEFINITIVE PROPOSALS AT THIS TIME.

3. OPENING REMARKS ON ANTIGUAN SIDE WERE MADE BY PHILLIPS WHO EMPHASIZED THE "GOOD RELATIONS" BETWEEN ANTIGUA AND THE U.S. AND BETWEEN THE ANTIGUAN PEOPLE AND U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL OPERATING OUR FACILITIES ON THAT ISLAND. PHILLIPS EXPRESSED HOPE THAT, IN PREPARING FOR AN AGREEMENT, THE USG WOULD LOOK AT THE BROADER QUESTION OF HOW IT COULD HELP THE GOA SOLVE IMPORTANT AND PRESSING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

4. DOD REPRESENTATIVE GAVE BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE FACILITIES AND STRESSED THE HELPFUL ROLE THE LATTER HAD PLAYED AND WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

5. DEPTOFF CONFIRMED OUR DESIRE TO RETAIN OUR MILITARY FACILITIES BEYOND 1977 AND INFORMED ANTIGUANS THAT WE EXPECT TO ENGAGE IN SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WITH GOA AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME NEXT YEAR TO REACH AN AGREEMENT FOR THE CONTINUED USE OF THESE FACILITIES. RESPONDING TO PHILLIPS REMARKS ON BROADER ANTIGUAN ECONOMIC REQUIREMENTS, WE POINTED OUT THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO THINK IN TERMS OF MODEST COMPENSATION. GIVEN U.S. CONGRESSIONAL AND BUDGETARY RESTRAINTS, SUCH COMPENSATION WILL HAVE TO COME OUT OF THE OPERATING BUDGETS OF THE ARMED SERVICES AND WOULD HAVE TO BE BASED ON A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS: THE RELOCATION COST; THE NON-OPERATIONAL NATURE OF THE FACILITIES; AND THEIR SMALL SIZE.

6. PHILLIPS SUGGESTED THAT COMPENSATION FOR FACILITIES SHOULD BE BASED ON ANTIGUAN ECONOMIC NEEDS RATHER THAN ON RELOCATION COST.

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HE STATED THAT US CAN HAVE "ANYTHING" IF WE PROVIDE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. IN THIS CONTEXT, BOTH PHILLIPS AND WILLIAMS STRESSED GOA'S NEED TO SOLVE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM, ALSO NOTED INABILITY OF THE GOA TO CONTROL SMUGGLING AND PATROL ANTIGUAN TERRITORIAL WATERS.

7. WE STRESSED SYMPATHY FOR ANTIGUAN NEEDS AND NOTED THAT WE PLAN TO CONTINUE ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE CDB, PEACE CORPS AND WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF AID'S REGIONAL PROGRAM. DEPTOFFS UNDERLINED HOWEVER THAT IN NO WAY DO WE WANT TO LINK DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND U.S. MILITARY REQUIREMENTS. THUS WE ARE NOT CONSIDERING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AS PART OF THE ANTICIPATED COMPENSATION FOR CONTINUED USE OF THE FACILITIES.

8. WE EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR NEW AGREEMENT BEFORE DECEMBER 1977 (THE NEW AGREEMENT TO BEGIN JANUARY 1, 1978). WE ALSO EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH OLD AGREEMENT AND SEE NO REASON CHANGE ITS PROVISIONS. GOA REPS IN NO WAY SUGGESTED ANY INTENTION TO ASK FOR CHANGES IN PRESENT AGREEMENT. THEY CONCLUDED BY SUGGESTING THAT NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NEW AGREEMENT BE HELD IN ANTIGUA NO EARLIER THAN MARCH 31. US REPS SAID WE WOULD RESPOND TO THIS SUGGESTION NEXT YEAR. KISSINGER

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